

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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O R 171341Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3395

INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

AMCONSUL GENOA

AMCONSUL TURIN

AMCONSUL TRIESTE

AMCONSUL PALERMO

UNCLAS ROME 4349

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IT

SUBJ: NEWSPAPER REPORTS "CLARIFICATION" OF US POLICY TOWARD ITALY

1. FLORENCE DAILY LA NAZIONE ON MARCH 17 RAN FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE BY ITS US CORRESPONDENT GIROLAMO MODESTI WITH HEADLINE, "US POSITION ON THE COMMUNIST PROBLEM IN ITALY HASN'T CHANGED." ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS PREPARED AND SENT TO THE WHITE HOUSE A DOCUMENT WHICH WILL PERMIT A "DEFINITIVE CLARIFICATION" OF THE PROBLEM. MODESTI PREDICTS DOCUMENT WILL RESULT IN A "DECLARATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL" WHICH WILL ENJOY THE MAXIMUM CREDIBILITY AND HELP AMBASSADOR GARDNER AVOID "EMBARRASSING SITUATIONS" SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL. THE FORM FOR THIS DECLARATION (WHICH MUST BE CLEAR BUT NOT SOUND LIKE A "TRUMPET OF WAR") IS REPORTEDLY THE SUBJECT OF CURRENT WHITE HOUSE --STATE CONSULTATION.

2. THE ARTICLE REPORTS THAT ALTHOUGH THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION  
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IS NOT ANY MORE FAVORABLE TO THE PCI THAN PAST US GOVERNMENTS, CERTAIN "FORMAL ASPECTS" OF AMERICAN POLICY -- DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WITH PCI AND PROHIBITION AGAINST ENTRY OF COMMUNISTS INTO US-- WILL BE CHANGED. WITHOUT A CLARIFICATION OF POLICY, THESE CHANGES WOULD BE READ AS INCREASED OPENNESS TOWARD THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS. THE STATE POSITION PAPER, PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION OF SECRETARY VANCE AND "UNDERSECRETARY FOR

POLITICAL AFFAIRS" HARTMAN IS REPORTED AS CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING FIVE MAIN POINTS:

- A. "THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO MAINTAIN RELATIONS IT HAS TRADITIONALLY HAD WITH ITALY."
  - B. "THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT, AS ALWAYS, DOES NOT INTEND TO INTERFERE IN ANY WAY IN ITALIAN INTERNAL QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS."
  - C. NATURALLY, THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAS A "PREFERENCE" FOR THOSE ITALIAN SYSTEMS AND PARTIES WHICH ARE DEMOCRATIC."
  - D. "THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ALSO HAS CLEAR SUSPICIONS AND DOUBTS ON THE DECLARED AND POSSIBLE COMMITMENT OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY TO DEMOCRACY, AS THAT CONCEPT IS UNDERSTOOD IN THE WEST."
  - E. "IN ANY CASE, THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IS DISPOSED TO COLLABORATE WITH ANY ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH GUARANTEES RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, INDEPENDENCE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES (THAT IS, THE SOVIET UNION), AND MAINTENANCE OF COMMITMENTS TO THE WESTERN ALLIANCE AND EUROPE."
3. MODESTI ATTRIBUTES TO AMBASSADOR GARDNER THE INTENTION TO "MADE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR" IN HIS PRIVATE CONTACTS WITH THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT THAT THE TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AMERICAN

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POSITION IS THAT WHATEVER ITALY DOES, AMERICAN "PREFERENCES" ARE FOR TOTAL "CLOSURE" TOWARD THE COMMUNISTS, WHICH IS THE ONLY WAY OF GUARANTEEING THE MAINTENANCE OF DEMOCRACY, INDEPENDENCE AND CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN THE "WESTERN ALLIANCE" AND "EUROPE".

4. IN A COMMENT, MODESTI DWELLS ON WHAT HE CALLS THE "INTERESTING OBSERVATION" THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT DOCUMENT SPEAKS OF THE "WESTERN ALLIANCE" AND NOT OF THE "ATLANTIC ALLIANCE." THIS, HE SAYS, WAS DONE IN ORDER TO GIVE THE ADMINISTRATION "GREATER ROOM FOR MANUEUVER" IN THE CASE OF COMMUNIST ACCESSION TO THE GOVERNMENT. IN ANY CASE, MODESTI GOES ON, THE FIFTH POINT OF THE POSITION PAPER MAY NOT APPEAR IN THE "CLARIFICATION" WHICH HE FORESEES. THAT WOULD, HE SAYS, CONTRIBUTE TO THE CLARITY AND PRECISION OF THE US POSITION.

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## Message Attributes

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